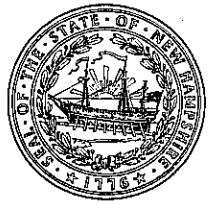




The State of New Hampshire
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES



Thomas S. Burack, Commissioner

January 21, 2009

The Honorable Mary Cooney, Chairman
House Municipal and County Government Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 301
Concord, NH 03301

Re: HB 189 enabling municipalities to establish energy commissions

Dear Chairman Cooney and Members of the Committee:

The Department of Environmental Services (DES) is pleased to testify in support of House Bill 189, which enables municipalities to establish energy commissions. This bill allows municipalities to establish energy commissions with specific powers, thus formalizing their role and mission and enables them to obtain resources such as energy efficiency funding to support their efforts. This legislation is consistent with a recommendation by the Governor's Climate Change Policy Task Force for actions government can take to reduce greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change. As you are aware, nearly 100 cities and towns have established local energy committees. These committees are looking for ways that municipalities can use less energy in heating and cooling their buildings, lighting their communities, and operating their municipal fleets. These initiatives will result in costs savings at a time when state and municipal budgets are significantly constrained. Establishing energy commissions will be a recommended action in New Hampshire's Climate Action Plan, to be released in February, because it is economically beneficial to the state while achieving greenhouse gas reductions.

Reducing energy use and using energy more efficiently will not only help municipalities to address their fiscal difficulties but will also reduce all forms of air pollution. Emissions from electricity generation, heating and cooling our buildings, and transportation include particulates which contribute to respiratory illness and asthma, sulfur dioxide which contributes to acid rain, nitrogen oxides which contribute to the formation of ozone, as well as carbon dioxide, the predominant greenhouse gas contributing to climate change.

We urge you to pass this legislation that will provide municipalities another tool for addressing their use of energy in the coming years. Should you have further questions or need additional information please feel free to contact Robert R. Scott, Director, Air Resources Division (271-1088, robert.scott@des.nh.gov) or Joanne Morin, Climate and Energy Program Manager (271-5552, joanne.morin@des.nh.gov).

Sincerely,

Thomas S. Burack
for Thomas S. Burack
Commissioner

cc: HB 189 sponsors